

The Information Window

The Van Tuyl Homestead

By Tom Watson, President

The Wantagh Preservation Society is proud to have been part of the vast community effort to have the Van Tuyl Homestead landmarked. The home is located at 3171 Elm Place, Wantagh. On January 5th the Town of Hempstead Landmark Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Town Board that the house be designated a Town of Hempstead landmark.

So many Wantagh residents signed the petition, sent emails and letters of support and came to the Landmark Commission meetings to speak in support of the landmark designation. Many organizations also supported the landmark designation effort – the Wantagh/Seaford Homeowner's Association, the Wantagh American Legion and of course the Wantagh Preservation Society. The Van Tuyl and Motschwiller families provided many photos and historical documents that were tremendously helpful with substantiating the historical significance of the home. Nassau County Legislator Steve Rhodes wrote a letter of support and although Hempstead Town Councilman Chris Carini had to remain neutral while the Landmark Commission considered the landmark application, he followed the community effort closely.

To get a structure landmarked by the Town of Hempstead it must have either architectural or historic significance, or both. The applicant of this application was Wantagh resident Joan Kemnitzer. Wantagh resident Heather Famiglietti worked tirelessly on the historical report with strong support from Wantagh resident Patricia Emanuel. The architectural and historic significance of the home is what made this application successful.

The house has been home to three families; the Van Tuyls (1925-1954), the Veritys (1954-1967) and the Motschwillers (1967-2020). The home is an excellent example of the English Colonial style and was built during the time when colonial revival architecture was at its ascendancy. A key aspect of the home's historic significance is that W. Harold Van Tuyl and his son Richard were both aviators of distinction. Lieutenant W. Harold Van Tuyl was a flying instructor in 1918 during WWI – a time when aviation was in its infancy (remember that the Wright brothers flight was in 1903 and the Lindbergh flight in 1927). W. Harold Van Tuyl's son Richard was 2nd Lieutenant and a commander of a B24 bomber; he paid the ultimate sacrifice to his country when his plane was shot down over Austria during WWII. He received a Purple Heart and Silver medal and is buried in France. There are many more historic elements of the home – too many to cover in this article. When the Society is able to resume its general meetings I hope to have a presentation given about this historic home. 📖



"The Homestead" located at 3171 Elm Place

Passing of Ellen Cook

By Fred Parola, Trustee



Ellen Cook

It is with profound sadness that I relate to you the passing of our beloved Ellen on Sunday evening, December 27th after a battle with cancer. Ellen was a lifetime resident of Wantagh involved in virtually every community organization and every positive initiative for our town. Ellen was a trustee of the Wantagh Preservation Society and active in the Daughters of the American Revolution, Jerusalem Chapter. She was a former Wantagh Republican Committee woman and served as the club's historian.

Most importantly, Ellen was pure love, giving and honest and true. Her death diminishes our world, but I trust the Lord will benefit from her presence in that better place. Deepest condolences to spouse Bob, son Bob Jr., daughter Alison and the whole McGee-Cook family. 📖

Wantagh Preservation Society

1700 Wantagh Avenue (Museum Location)

PO Box 132 (Mailing Address)

Wantagh, Long Island, New York 11793

516.826.8767

www.wantagh.li/museum

The traditional Wantagh Christmas Tree and Menorah lighting ceremony took place last month, but due to COVID, it was open to only a small group. Hopefully this year's event will be "back to normal".



Wantagh Preservation Society

Elected Officers

President: Tom Watson
Vice President: Bob Meagher
Recording Secretary: Mary Corrigan
Treasurer: Wayne Wagner

Appointed Officers

Curator: Carol Poulos
Newsletter Editor: Jim Colotti

Trustees

Bob Cook
Fred Parola
Norene Parola
Claire Reisert
Barry Rivadue
Paul Sigler
Matt Susco
Mary Wagner
Elaine Yarris

The Information Window is the official newsletter of the Wantagh Preservation Society, and is published approximately four times each year. Please obtain written permission from the individual authors before using material contained in this publication.

We hope you enjoy our newsletter. Your comments, ideas and suggestions are welcome!

wps@wantagh.li



Richard Van Tuyl, member of the first family to occupy "The Homestead", a home that was recently recommended for landmarking - please see full article on page 1

Although the Wantagh Museum is currently closed, renovations are underway!



Please see page 3 for more information.

Attention: Professional Photographers

Whether it be spring, summer, fall or winter, the grounds of the Wantagh Museum provide a scenic venue for professional photographers. However, a Photography Permit is required for all professional photographers that use the museum grounds.



The permit fee is only \$50 per hour (an additional fee of \$25 applies for access to the train observation deck). Your fees provide an important source of revenue for our Museum and helps us maintain its beauty that you depend on.

During your photo shoot, the museum grounds remain open to others and there can be no reservations of any particular area. However, residents that visit the museum have always been courteous.



Photography cannot take place before 10 AM or after dusk. Permits are rain or shine.

An approved permit must be presented during the shoot upon request. To apply for a permit, please scan or click the QR code.

Thank you for your support and for helping us maintain the grounds of the Wantagh Museum. 📖

New Display Cabinets for the Wantagh Museum

by Tom Watson, President



Two new Display Cabinets at the Museum, ready to be filled with interesting artifacts

Thanks to a grant from Nassau County the Wantagh Preservation Society was able to purchase museum-quality display cabinets for the Wantagh train station and Jamaica Parlor Car. The cabinets have been installed and are currently being filled with local historical artifacts for display when the museum reopens.

The Wantagh Preservation Society wishes to thank Legislator Steve Rhodes, Nassau County Parks Commissioner Eileen Krieb and the County Legislature for their continued support of the Wantagh Museum Complex. 📖



A new Display Cabinet being loaded onto the Jamaica Parlor Car



Become a WPS member - scan or click the QR code or mail in the coupon below - and thanks!

Now is the Perfect Time to Renew your Membership

By Mary Wagner, Membership Chairman

Our membership drive for 2021 is underway. The money raised through membership is used for maintenance of our museum and grounds or worthwhile projects that arise. For your information, the society has started placing pictures from our collection on the NY Heritage website. You can access it on nyheritage.org and then enter Wantagh. For more information about this project, please see the article on the last page.

You are not just joining the society – you become a supporter of history by enabling the society to continue its work to educate residents, especially children of Wantagh's past. The museum has been closed due to the pandemic, but we hope to have it open in April of this year.

Please join us by paying your dues for 2021. We also invite you to become an active member of the society. Please also let us know if you have any old Wantagh photos, old newspapers or any other historical artifacts. Our contact information is on page 2. Thanks! 📖

We Need You! Join or Renew Your Membership in 2021!

Name: _____
 Street: _____
 Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ New ☐ Renew ☐
 Email: _____

I'd like to help with:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening & Planting | <input type="checkbox"/> General Meeting Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hosting Museum on a Sunday | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Event Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Publication & Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | | |

Check Membership Level: ☐ Individual \$15 ☐ Family \$25 ☐ Friend \$35 ☐ Patron \$50 ☐ Fellow \$100

Please Make Checks Payable To: Wantagh Preservation Society PO Box 132 Wantagh, NY 11793

"Preservation with a Purpose."

Wantagh Preservation Society - New York State Digital Heritage Website


By Carol Poulos, Curator

Do you enjoy historical photos of Wantagh? Have you ever found some on Facebook that you enjoyed seeing but could not find them again? Which Wantagh group were they posted in and when, and what was the title of the picture? Facebook is a wonderful place to share but it is not meant to be a historical archive. In New York State, there is a portal for learning about the people and places and events that contributed to New York State, the New York Digital Heritage Collection. Currently, there are 30 contributors in Nassau County and we are pleased to announce that we are among them! What does this mean? It means that anyone can come to the website, click on Wantagh Preservation Society and view photos and documents in our collection. They will be there forever and there is a search box! We have spent 10 years scanning and have nearly 600 pictures posted at present. We continue to add images and many more will be coming.

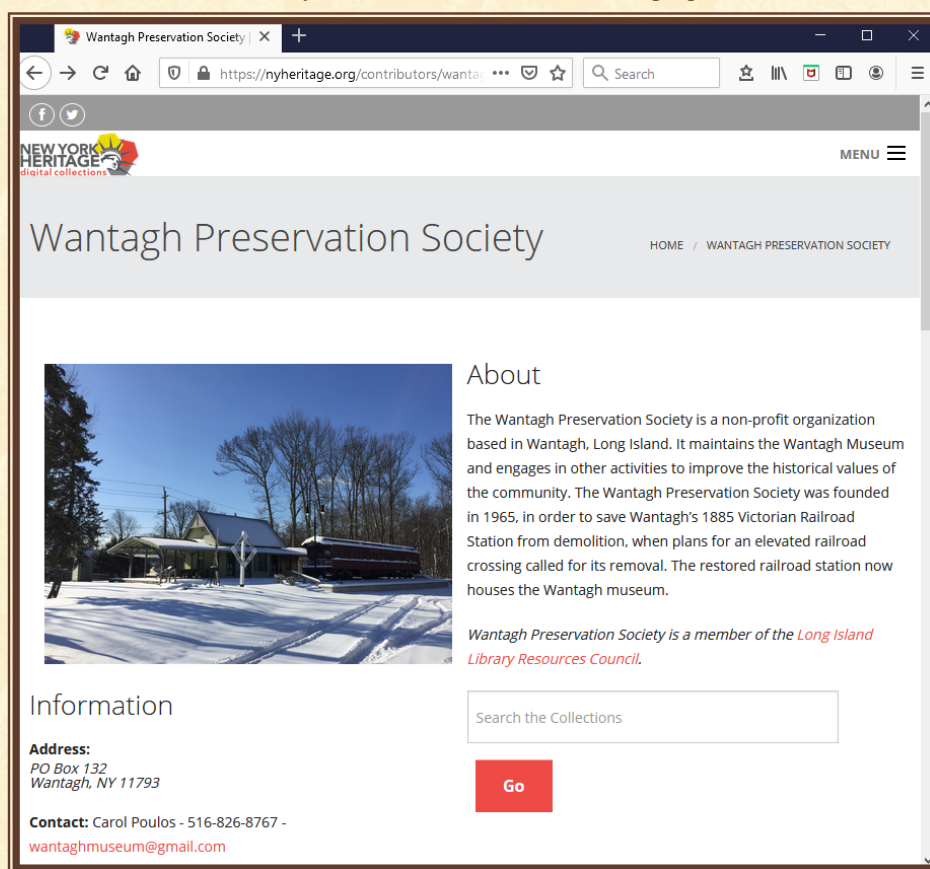
This bulk of the collection is from a few donors. We have 32 boxes of scanned slides taken by Ted Wiebel back in the 1960's & 1970's. Many are copies of old resident's photos and some were current images at that time. Warren Hiltonsmith photographed the 1912 Jamaica Parlor Car, its move to Wantagh and restoration. Jim Hiltonsmith documented the LIRR Grade Elevation Project and many houses in Wantagh with his images. Wantagh Elementary School teacher Grace Trojanowski documented Wantagh in 1965 with her photos, donated by her son, Ford. Bill Stafford donated a huge collection of Wantagh High items from 1959-1961. Steven Waldman offered his expertise on many of the railroad and parkway photos. Others have donated as well.

We could have watermarked these pictures, but chose not to. They are free to use for educational purposes. In return, we ask that if you have old photos, documents or ephemera that you please share it with us so we may add it to this collection. Doing so will assure that it will be available for others to see for years to come. It will make you feel good because you are helping preserve our history.

Of course, if you would like to join the Wantagh Preservation Society (please see page 3), that would be wonderful too. We are a small group of volunteers and there is plenty to be done. Running a historical society & museum is hard work and takes money. Your dues and another pair of hands would help us in our mission.

Enjoy the collection and if you like what you see, go ahead and share but please give us credit and encourage others to contribute. 

To visit the website, scan or click the QR code, or type: <https://nyheritage.org/contributors/wantagh-preservation-society>



Landing Page of the Wantagh Preservation Society on the NYS Digital Heritage Website